



RETIREMENT ATTITUDE AND UNKNOWN CAREGIVING ROLES: FINDINGS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BABY BOOM CAREER WOMEN NATIONAL SURVEY

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Background

Baby boomers (individuals born from 1946 to 1964) are reaching retirement age, however they have experienced a very different life course than previous generations. Social and economic changes for baby boom women, such as the enormous growth of women in the workforce and single-parent families, reflect women's multiple roles and identities. In order to ensure that baby boom career women experience optimal retirement, or age-related work transitions, it is crucial to examine factors that contribute to towards their view of retirement. Baby boomers are also living longer than previous generations, which has resulted in baby boom career women having more active, multi-generational caregiving roles (e.g., caring for spouse, parents, grandparents, grandchildren) (Blieszer, 2009).

Aim

The aim of this paper is to investigate Australian baby boom career women's attitude towards retirement, the differential effect of unknown caregiver roles, and the consequence of marital status.

Method

This paper reports findings from 1,051 women who participated in the Australia Baby Boom Career Women national survey. Previous research has found cohort differences between early baby boomers (EBBs) (born from 1946 to 1955) and late baby boomers (LBBs) (born from 1955 to 1964); therefore, this paper includes EBB/LBB comparisons. Attitude towards retirement was determined by a forced-response question (positive, negative, undecided); marital status was derived from demographics. A forced-response survey question, "Are you concerned about unknown caregiving roles in your retirement years?" was rated on an 11-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Findings and Conclusion

Results revealed that EBBs were significantly more concerned about unknown caregiver roles than LBBs. However, EBBs who reported a positive or undecided attitude towards retirement were significantly less concerned about unknown caregiver roles. Additionally, married/de facto EBBs were significantly less concerned about unknown caregiver roles compared to single women. Explanations for these findings will be discussed along with implications and recommendations.

References

Blieszbner, R. (2009). Who are the ageing families? In S. Quails, S. Zarit, & H. Steven (Eds.), *Ageing families and caregiving*, (pp. 1 - 18), Hoboken, NJ, John Wiley & Sons.